# Evening Telegraph

MONDAY, MAY 22, 1871.

THE NEW DEAD-LOCK.

Another dead-lock has occurred in the State Legislature, originating in the determination of the Democratic Senators to compel the Republican House to consent to certain amendments to the Registry law. If no compromise is effected, several bills of general interest, and a large number of private measures, will fail to become laws. The bill providing for constitutional reform will be defeated, and the Appropriation bill will be jeopardized. As matters now stand, both parties threaten that they will go to the people on the issue as it is made up, thus carrying the legislative quarrel into a popular canvass. It therefore behooves the Republican House to be quite certain that it is well armed at all points before it accepts this gage of a general battle, and to carefully consider whether a portion of the Democratic demand for a modification of the Registry law should not be granted.

There can be no doubt that the existing arrangements for counting the returns of the elections of this city are dangerously defective, and that the proposed remedy of having them counted in the presence of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas seems to be at once necessary and likely to be efficacious in averting existing evils. The Republican party, being a party of law, order, and justice, cannot afford, on a point like this, to take issue with the Democracy. It is no part of its legitimate functions to shield men who venture to tamper with fair elections, or to afford to dishonest return judges opportunities to nullify the popular will. The only valid argument in favor of the Registry law is its usefulness in preventing such frauds as Democratic leaders have notoriously practised in former elections, particularly in the fall elections of 1868; and no man will presume to say this object cannot be better attained by a provision requiring that the returns shall be counted in the presence of the Judges of the County Courts, than by a system which excites distrust and indignation, and which has already led to dangerous scenes of violence.

On this single point, therefore, we think it would be at ence just and politic for the Republicans of the House to defer to the demands of the Democratic Senators. Any effort of the latter to make such vital changes in the Registry law as would once more hand over the city to the tender mercies of the ballot-box stuffers of 1868 should be stubbornly resisted; but it is to the interest of all good citizens that the returns of our elections should be peacefully and fairly counted, and this feature of the Democratic programme should be at once acceded to by the Republicans.

ANOTHER NAIL IN GEARYS COFFIN.

WHEN Shakespeare wrote that "the quality of mercy is not strained," it was, of course, impossible for him to foresee the performances of John W. Geary as a dispenser of pardons. Some of Geary's predecessors have liberated more criminals who were removed from society for society's good, but the host of petty offenders who have been the recipients of Executive clemency under former administrations cannot to excuse the scandalous pardons granted by the present Governor. Geary is to be judged by the quality rather than by the quantity of the pardons he has granted, and he appears to be so determined to make his record as the criminal's friend so clear and unequivocal that it will be impossible for his admirers to "drag him out" for a third term, no matter how anxious they may be to do so. The Ficken pardon-which, in point of fact, was an unlimited license to shoot small boys whenever the recipient of it might feel in the humor to amuse himself in such a manner-proved to the satisfaction of all honest men that Geary is not a proper person to fill any office of trust or responsibility: but not satisfied with this, his Excellencymay we soon say his late Excellency-has driven another nail in his political coffin by granting a pardon to John H. Brill, who was convicted on the 9th of March last of making fraudulent election returns, and was sentenced to an imprisonment of one year and to pay a fine of \$100. The evidence against Brill was clear and emphatic, and as his offense was a particularly outrageous one, as it was a blow at the very foundation of social order and republican government, the interference of Governor Geary, at the dictation of a gang of trading politicians, makes him a participant in the crime, and demonstrates his utter worthlessness as an administrator of justice. There are certain men in this community who look upon such a crime as that of Brill's as a meritorious and not a criminal performance; and such as these, whether they call themselves Republicans or Democrats, can be considered as nothing else than enemies of society, who deserve to be jealously watched, and who should meet with the opposition of all right-minded citizens whenever they attempt to push themselves and their partisans into the management of public affairs. A party of these professional politicians went to Harrisburg ostensibly to oversee the convention for the nomination of Auditor-General and Surveyor-General. They called themselves the Unconditional Republican Club, but this name, like the pretended object of their visit to Harrisburg, was a mere blind, and the single end and aim they had in view was the unconditional pardon of Brill. Under these circumstances the Unconditional Pardon Club would have been a more appropriate name for the party. prominent in which were individuals who have figured prominently in the Ficken

pardon case and other equally discreditable

circumstances. Brill had served these men.

and they were determined that he should not

suffer for his fidelity to the only principles of

political or moral action they subscribe to, | also which are, to get office by any possible means; to make as much as possible out of the publie by any possible means; and to remain in office as long as possible by any possible means. Honesty is a word such schemers as these have long since ceased to believe in. the public offices they consider but their lawful prey, and the manipulation of election returns as the best and safest method of obtaining office. Brill was one of the instruments used to accomplish their purposes, and as he had been useful in the past so he might be in the future: at any rate, the "Unconditionals" considered it incumbent on them to take care of their friends, and the prompt surrender of Geary proves that he has a greater ambition to be in the good graces of the friends of Brill than to retain a spotless reputation as a man and as the Governor of a great Commonwealth.

We understand a regular bargain was made between Geary and the "Unconditionals" for the pardon of Brill, and the pardon was granted not because any good and sufficient reasons could be assigned for the release of the criminal, but because the Unconditional Pardon Club guaranteed to endorse Geary and to procure a favorable mention of him in the resolutions to be passed by the convention. The following, which appears among the resolutions, represents a part of the price paid for the liberation of Brill from durance vile:-

"That our confidence in the firmness, wisdom, and integrity of our present worthy Governor, John W. Geary, remains unshaken, and that we believe his qualifications for the office he now holds are un-questionable, as is clearly proven by the manner in which he has brought the State safely through every

As there was not a man in the convention who had the slightest confidence in either the firmness, the wisdom, or integrity of John W. Geary, it is difficult to find a polite word to characterize this resolution.

Doubtless our pardon-granting Governor imagines that the "Unconditionals" will repay him by "dragging him out" as the Republican Gubernatorial candidate a third time, or that they may even insist upon his accepting the Republican nomination for the Presidency; but the probabilities are that he will find Mr. Brill's friends less influential that he expects, and that despite their dexterous wire-pulling the people will conclude that the granter of the Ficken and Brill pardons is not a proper person longer to disgrace the executive chair of this Commonwealth. As for the Presidency, the idea of Geary being the Republican candidate is too preposterous to be thought of for a moment. Despite our warnings Geary has insisted on committing political hari-kari. and the Unconditional Pardon Club will not be able to save him from the consequence of his own act, which is political annihilation

#### THE MILITIA TAX.

THE Military Board of the First Division N. G. of Pennsylvania, "believing that the subject only needs to be properly understood in order to remove much of the unpopularity of the law caused by continual and persistent misrepresentation," have published a pamphlet giving their views with regard to the militia tax, with reports of the Receiver, Division Paymaster, and brigade officers, which contain the receipts of the tax during the year ending May 2, 1871, with the manner of their distribution. This pamphlet, the substance of which we gave last week, is, we believe, the first official statement with regard to this tax that has ever been published, and as it has undoubtedly been elicited by the criticisms which the Division Board complain of as "persistent misrepretations," it may be considered as a promising sign that the division officers and their subordinates of the Military Tax Office are beginning to have an appreciation of the fact that the citizens who pay the tax are interested in knowing something about its collection and distribution, and that they are anxious to be informed as to whether they get the worth of their money. While the division officers profess to believe that their statements contained in the pamphlet before us ought to be suffieient to silence criticism, even if they do not make our citizens enthusiastic on the subject of paying the tax, we find in them ample evidence of the correctness of our statement that the tax is an improper one, that it is improperly collected and distributed, and that it is practically of no benefit whatever to the community at large.

According to the report of the Receiver, the sum of \$22,321.02 was collected during the year ending May 2. Of this amount \$5593.27, or nearly onefourth, was absorbed for necessary expenses. Now a tax which costs such a percentage as this to collect ought to be very important indeed, especially when it is attended with so many irritating and obnoxious features as is this militia tax, and the majority of plain, practical common sense people will not be long in coming to the conclusion that \$1.25 per man, which was the largest dividend made during the past year, will scarcely do enough for the support of the militia of the First division for the citizens of Philadelphia to be annoyed as they are in its collection. The reason given for the non-collection of a larger amount is curious. The Receiver in his report says:-

"The discrepancy which exists between the total number of citizens envolled as liable to military duty by the assessors, and the number who pay the com-mutation tax, is best exemplified by a comparison with the figures of the Eighth ward:—

Total number enrolled..... Number paid.
Exempt for service and disability...... ...854 \_\_\_\_1640

Cannot be found (supposed rem )ved) ....... 925

Here is a practical confession on the part of the Receiver that out of 2565 persons enrolled 1779, or nearly three-fourths, have not paid the tax or excused themselves in a legal manner. Further than this, it is a fact, for which proof can be produced, that persons have been excased without the production of sufficient evidence, and that the tax has not been collected in cases where those liable to it have shown a sturdy disposition to contest its payment to the last. It can

be proved that the Collector of Delinquent Taxes has sent his impudent circulars to persons who have already paid the tax, but who, in case their receipts were lost or mislaid, would have no remedy but to pay it again. Can it, in view of these facts, be asserted that the business of collecting this tax is conducted in other than a loose, irregular, and improper manner? It is useless for the Division Board, the Receiver, or the Collector to contend that they have not ample power to get every dollar due them under the law, for all the enactments with regard to the militia tax have been prepared in this city by those interested and carried up to Harrisburg and engineered through the Legislature. If those entrusted with the collection of the tax have not sufficient power they themselves are alone to blame. The fact is, however, that no persons are better aware of the utter inutility of the militia tax, to any but those who get their living by its collection, than the Division Board and those in its employ: and the officers of the board, in the statement before us, freely admit that the principle of supporting the militia by a commutation tax is wrong in principle and practice. We approve decidedly of a tax for the support of the militia, but it should be sufficient for the purpose, and it should be paid by the public at large, and not by a portion of the community only. We hope therefore, that the Legislature will begin the work of reform by abolishing the present useless and odious commutation tax, and then proceed to reorganize our militia system upon a proper basis, and provide suitable means for its support which will bear equally upon all.

IT IS NOW definitely understood that the Reading Railroad Company has nearly perfected arrangements which will, in the near future, place under its immediate control a sufficient body of anthracite coal lands in the Schuylkill and Mahanoy regions to supply the present and prospective demands of this region. This business change is one of no slight significance, as it will lead rapidly to a consolidation of all the diverse interests hitherto represented by coal-land owners, operators, and various transporting compa-

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